

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1872.

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*REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1896.*

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BEING THE

TWENTY-SECOND

ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE

*Sanitary Condition*

OF THE

TROWBRIDGE URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT,

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Presented to the

*TROWBRIDGE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL*

BY

R. T. RICHARDSON,

F. Br. Inst. P.H.,

Medical Officer of Health of the Trowbridge Urban  
Sanitary Authority.



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TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS  
OF THE  
**Urban District Council of Trowbridge.**

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GENTLEMEN,

I beg to lay before you my Fourth Annual Report on the Public Health and Sanitary condition of the District.

During the past year 138 persons died in this District—75 males and 63 females, inclusive of two not belonging to this District. In the same period there were 236 births registered—123 males and 113 females.

The estimated population of the whole District to the middle of 1896 is 11,835 ; that at the last census, 1891, being 11,717. The birth and death rates are therefore 19·9 and 11·6 respectively.

The water supply is good ; the source is from the chalk hills at Upton Scudamore, near Warminster. The amount used per head per diem is about 17 gallons. The supply is constant.

The system of sewerage adopted is the water carriage system, and the sewage for the most part is discharged into the river Biss.

There are about 500 water-closets, so called, without a sufficient supply of water for flushing, the removal of excrement and the cleansing of the pan being dependent on the more or less—more often less—methodically pouring of water by hand into the pans. This prevents the rapid removal of excrement, and the pans are as a consequence not kept clean. The owners of the property object to put flushing apparatus to these closets for two reasons : The first is that the property does not pay already, and the other that there would always be, if flushing apparatus were adopted, a constant outlay for repairs, owing to the carelessness and often wilful mischief of their tenants. These closets are in every case outside the houses.



The refuse is collected by the Sanitary Authority's scavenger twice a week and deposited in various parts of the District. The practice of depositing the refuse in the vicinity of populous parts of the town has been discontinued.

The condition of the homes of the Working Classes is fairly good; many new houses of a better class have been built, consequently many of the older ones have become uninhabited.

The four houses, Nos. 23, 24, 25 and 26, Shail Lane, Conigree, represented to be unfit for human habitation, have been put into a proper condition, and are now inhabited. The house No. 4, Newtown, reported to the Council as unfit, &c., is still unoccupied, not having been put into proper repair. There were four cases of over-crowding, of which three were abated, the remaining one was summoned at the Police Court, in January, 1897, and an order to abate was obtained.

The chief industries are: The manufacture of cloth, brewing, iron foundry and engineering, mattress making, etc., etc. I have found no particular injurious effect upon the health of the work-people from working at these industries.

The Biss is the only stream passing through the District. It is sluggish and winding in its course. It is rendered unsightly by the chemicals used in the dying of the cloth being discharged into it. This takes place in its course through the town.

It is polluted by nearly the whole of the sewage being discharged into it. This takes place outside the town, about one hundred yards away from the inhabitants, in a north-westerly direction, many houses having been built in the Bradford road, and building is still in progress in this direction.

The question of the disposal of the town's sewage has advanced a stage. Plans, &c., have been prepared by Mr. W. H. STANLEY, A.M.I.C.E., and a Local Government Board enquiry has been held to borrow the money, but their report is not to hand. The Council have under consideration at present the "Septic" system of disposal.

There is practically only one Burial Ground, viz :—The Cemetery, which is away from the thickly-populated part of the town, and is not over-crowded by any means. The Trinity Church yard is full, and it is only in exceptional cases that a burial takes place there.

The slaughter-houses, 12 in number, have been inspected by me, and are kept in a satisfactory condition.

The bake-houses, 26 in number, have also been inspected by me, and they, too, are kept in a cleanly and satisfactory manner. All are above ground, no drain or any nuisance whatever being connected with them.

The common lodging-houses, 3 in number, have also been inspected by me, and have generally given satisfaction.

There have been no new bye-laws adopted during the year relating to sanitary work.

The district has been inspected by me once a Quarter, accompanied by the Sanitary Inspector, with the result that notices have been served to remedy any nuisance existing. The courts in the district have also been frequently inspected by me.

For sanitary improvements effected during the year I must refer your Council to the Surveyor's Annual Report.

The several Infectious Diseases have occurred in the District as follows:—

Fifteen cases of Scarlet Fever have been notified during the year, against four in 1895.

January 9—Scarlet Fever—Hilperton Marsh. In all probability infected at Holt.

February 24—Scarlet Fever—Beaven's Yard. Impossible to trace the source of infection. Closet in wash-house in a filthy condition, no water for flushing, trap in wash-house defective.

March 11—Scarlet Fever—Beaven's Yard. Infected from previous case.

March 11—               "                               "                               "                               "

May 9—Scarlet Fever—Ashton Street. In all probability imported.

September 1—Scarlet Fever—Islington. Sent to Isolation Hospital on September 24. This case in all probability was imported or arose from some case which had neglected to notify. Closet in very foul state, no water for flushing.

September 11—Scarlet Fever—Upper Broad Street, Conigre. Infected from the previous case. Closet old and defective, no water for flushing. The closet with three others emptied directly into a cesspit 6 feet square, and 7 feet 6 inches deep, the overflow going into the main sewer. Seven loads of filth were taken out. The cesspit is now filled up.

September 12—Scarlet Fever—Gloucester Road. This was in all probability a fresh importation, a child having visited, who had been discharged from Fever Hospital in London in convalescent state, and came here for change of air. No water for flushing w.c., drain trap defective.

September 14—Scarlet Fever—Upper Broad Street. Infected from the case at Upper Broad Street.

September 15—Scarlet Fever—Upper Broad Street.

September 21—Scarlet Fever—Islington. Infected from the case at Islington, removed to Isolation Hospital on the 24th September.

September 24—Scarlet Fever—Islington. Infected from the first case at Islington, removed to the Isolation Hospital on September 24.

October 3—Scarlet Fever—The Parade. Removed to Isolation Hospital on the same day.

October 17—Scarlet Fever—Alma Street. Removed to Isolation Hospital the same day.



November 26—Scarlet Fever—The Down. Infected in all probability from Market Lavington (a friend of the family having paid a visit from this place, staying from Saturday, 13th, to Tuesday, the 16th. On the Sunday she kept in bed for a time, and was covered with a scarlet rash). Removed to Isolation Hospital the same day.

The Isolation Hospital in Silver Street Lane has been used for the isolation of six cases, and has been the means of cutting short what might have been a serious epidemic. It is, however, inadequate to cope with any very serious epidemic, such as small-pox, &c.

There were five cases of Erysipelas, against 14 in 1895.

One case of Diphtheria was notified: Frome Road—Closet not many yards from back door, pan old and filthy, trap in yard defective, no water for flushing; water supply, Company's.

Fourteen cases of Typhoid fever (one fatal) were notified during the year, against one in 1895:

March 4th—Typhoid fever—Church Walk. Closet stopped up, full to overflowing with excrement, no water for flushing. Pig tub, bucket with horse manure, &c., kept in yard.

March 21st—Typhoid fever—Mortimer Street. Closet not many yards from back door, pan old and filthy, no water for flushing.

March 26th—Typhoid fever—Bradley Road. Closet by side of kitchen, wall cracked all the way down, pan old and filthy, no water for flushing.

March 26th—Typhoid fever—West Street. Closet not many feet from back door, no water for flushing.

May 7th—Typhoid fever—Mortimer Street. Drainage defective.

May 14th—Typhoid fever—Dursley Road. Same drainage system as above.

June 5th—Typhoid fever—Pilewell Buildings. Drinking water from pump contaminated with oxidised products of sewage, &c. No water for flushing w.c.

June 10th—Typhoid fever—Gas Works Road, Conigre. Drainage defective.

June 11th—Typhoid fever—Newtown. Probably by drinking water from Pilewell pump.

July 2nd—Typhoid fever—New Road, Mortimer Street. Closet not many yards away from back door, no water for flushing. Boy supposed to have drunk some water from River Biss.

July 11th—Typhoid fever—Harding's Yard, Newtown. (This case was fatal). The drain here was faulty, the w.c. filthy and not properly flushed, as shown by the paper and excrement in the pipe on lifting up the trap, which unfortunately was in front of and not many feet from the door of the house.

July 16th—Typhoid fever—Timbrell Street. Drainage bad. Pan of w.c. cracked. This house has a flushing cistern, but it proved the advantage of the cistern over the bucket, for when water was poured down the w.c. from a bucket the water went straight down without washing the sides of the pan; it was only when the water was whirled round the sides of the pan by the force of the water in the cistern that the leakage was discovered.

July 25th—Typhoid fever—The Down. This house has no connection with the sewer. The closet here was at the bottom of the garden, some distance from the house, and consisted of the pail and earth variety. In all probability this case was infected elsewhere.

August 15th—Typhoid fever—Church Walk. Second case in same house. Closet pan filthy; no water for flushing.

With the exception of Pilewell, all the houses were supplied with the Company's water, and I can only account for the case at one of the new houses in Newtown with the probability of this boy having drunk of the water from the Pilewell pump opposite. I took particular notice of the milk supply, but could not trace any of the cases to milk infection.

In July I reported having inspected the localities, and in most, with a few exceptions, have been obliged to come to the conclusion that the cause of this outbreak was the absorption of a poison from the decomposition of sewage, the fermentation of fœcal matters, and the absence of proper sanitary arrangements. The drains not being properly flushed, sewage accumulates and stagnates in them, the specific fermentation goes on rapidly under the influence of high temperature, and produces the poison. The great preventive measure is the prompt removal of fœcal matters, so that neither air nor water may be contaminated by them. I recommend more ventilation in the house drains and proper apparatus for flushing the closets. For the most part these cases occurred during the hot and dry periods of May, June, July, and greater part of August.

Measles and Whooping Cough were prevalent during the latter part of the year.

Influenza paid the District a visit in January and February, but the cases were very mild in character.

A tramp slept at Smith's common lodging house, on the 15th or 16th of March, and was admitted to the Warminster Workhouse, suffering from Small-pox, a few days afterwards, but nothing further accrued from it.

In July, having had a case of Typhoid Fever notified, and caused in all probability from drinking the water from the Pilewell pump, I had the water analysed, with the following result, viz :—

“This water is most highly polluted with the oxidysed products, resulting from the decomposition of organic Nitrogenous Matters, and is quite unfit for drinking or for use as a domestic water supply. A very large proportion of the “total solids” is derived from water which has percolated through land highly charged with sewage products or substances of a similar nature.”

(Signed)

J. W. GATEHOUSE, F.I.C.

I recommended the Council to stop this water supply.

The Council, however, thought it would be well to have the well cleaned out. This was done, and in August another Analysis was made, with the following results, viz :—

“This water is entirely derived from percolation through strata which are saturated with decomposing organic Nitrogenous Matters (sewage), and therefore cannot be relied on, nor should it be used, as the source of a domestic water supply.”

(Signed)

J. W. GATEHOUSE, F.I.C.

I again recommend the Council to stop this water supply, it being dangerous to the public health. The pump hand was ordered forthwith to be kept chained up under lock and key.

The disease known as Cancer, shows a slight decrease, 6 cases compared with 8 cases in 1895.

On the other hand Phthisis has slightly increased, 11 cases compared with 10 cases in 1895.



TABLE OF DEATHS

During the Year 1896, in the Trowbridge Urban Sanitary District, classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

NAME OF LOCALITY.	MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES, AT SUBJOINED AGES.								(i)	MORTALITY FROM SUBJOINED CAUSES, DISTINGUISHING DEATHS OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OF AGE.										
	(b) At all Ages.	(c) Under 1 year.	(d) 1 and under 5.	(e) 5 and under 15.	(f) 15 and under 25.	(g) 25 and under 65.	(h) 65 and upwards.	Enteric or Typhoid.		Measles.	Whooping Cough.	Diarrhoea and Dysentery.	Rheumatic Fever.	Phthisis.	Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Pleurisy.	Heart Disease.	Injuries.	All other Diseases.	TOTAL.	
The Trowbridge Urban Sanitary District ..	138	27	11	2	4	51	43	Under 5 ..... 5 upwards	1	1	1			13		1	21	38		
Total ..	138	27	11	2	4	51	43	Under 5 ..... 5 upwards	1	1	1	2		13		1	21	38		
									1								59	100		

TABLE OF POPULATION, BIRTHS, AND OF NEW CASES OF INFECTIOUS SICKNESS

Coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health during the year 1896, in the Trowbridge Urban Sanitary District, classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

NAME OF LOCALITY.	POPULATION AT ALL AGES.		(d) Registered Births.	(e) Aged under 5 or over 5.	NEW CASES OF SICKNESS COMING TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.				CASES REMOVED TO ISOLATION HOSPITAL.	
	(b) Census 1891.	(c) Estimated to middle of 1896.			Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Enteric or Typhoid.		Erysipelas.	Scarlatina.
							Fevers.			
Trowbridge Urban Sanitary District	11,717	11,835	236	Under 5 ..... 5 upwards	4 ..... 11	1 ..... 14	..... 5	..... 3	3 ..... 3	
Totals .. ..	11,717	11,835	236	Under 5 ..... 5 upwards	4 ..... 11	1 ..... 14	..... 5	..... 3	3 ..... 3	

## VITAL STATISTICS.

The number of births registered during the year were 236, viz :—123 males and 113 females, being a birth-rate of 19·9 per 1000.

The number of deaths registered during the same period were 138, viz :—75 males and 63 females, being a death-rate of 11·6 per 1000, but as two of these were of persons not belonging to the District, the corrected death-rate will be 11·4 per 1000.

The deaths amongst children, under one year, were 27, a death-rate of 2·2 per 1000, (and included premature births 10, Atrophy 3, Tabes mesenterica 4, Diarrhœa 1, Convulsions 1, Laryngitis 2, Bronchitis and Pneumonia 6), being 19·5 per cent. of the whole numbers, and 15·6 per cent. of the births. This mortality is far too high.

Zymotic disease was accountable for 3 deaths, Typhoid fever 1, Measles 1, and Whooping Cough 1), a death-rate of 0·2 per 1000, or 2·1 per cent. of the deaths.

The ages at death varied from 26 hours to 90 years. There were 43 deaths over 65 years of age; a death-rate of 3·6 per 1000 (31·1 per cent. of the whole number), including 19 between 65—75; 14 between 75—85; 10 between 85—95.

Below is a table summarising the chief points of the year's vital statistics:—

Birth-rate	...	...	...	...	19·9 per 1000.
Death-rate	...	...	...	...	11·4 „
Zymotic death-rate	...	...	...	...	0·2 „
Death-rate among children under one	...	...	...	...	2·2 „
Proportion of deaths under one to 1000					
births	...	...	...	...	195·6 „
Death-rate at 65 and upwards	...	...	...	...	3·6 „

There were 11 inquests held during the year.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

R. T. RICHARDSON,

F. Br. Inst. P.H., M.O.H.

## TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS

OF THE

*TROWBRIDGE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.*

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my report for the past *Half-Year*, as Surveyor and Inspector of Nuisances of the Urban District Council of Trowbridge.

The building trade, though not brisk, shews an improvement on the previous year; the number of plans passed for new houses, &c., being greater than in 1895, the number being as follows:—

Dwelling houses and Business Premises	...	...	...	35
Additions, Alterations, and Small Erections	...	...	...	21
				—
Total				56
				—

Four new houses have been passed for occupation as compared with six in the previous year.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL.—The question of the disposal of the town sewage has made progress during the year, and plans prepared by Mr. W. H. STANLEY, A.M.I.C.E., have been laid before the Local Government Board, who have held an enquiry. I hope next year to report the completion of the disposal works, and the settlement of this most important, but difficult and vexed question.

The re-paving, re-kerbing and channeling of some of the main road footpaths, and the setting back of Bradford Road, has been again deferred, owing to the difference with the County Council over the mode of repayment.

The following table sets forth the particulars of the work of inspection and nuisances detected and abated:—

Complaints received	...	...	...	...	...	21
Cottages inspected	...	...	...	...	...	53
Common Lodging Houses inspected	...	..	...	...	...	3
Slaughter-houses inspected	...	...	...	...	...	12
Houses erected or re-built, for which certificates were applied for	...	...	...	...	...	6
Houses passed for occupation	...	..	...	...	...	6
Premises newly connected with water mains	...	...	...	...	...	61
Well closed	...	...	...	...	...	1
Sample of water taken for analysis	...	...	...	...	...	1



Nuisances from animals improperly kept and from						
Slaughter-houses	...	...	...	...	...	15
Over-crowding of dwelling houses	...	...	...	...	...	4
Houses closed	...	...	...	...	...	2
Houses disinfected	...	...	...	...	...	5
W.C.'s repaired	...	...	...	...	...	21
W.C.'s supplied with flushing apparatus	...	...	...	...	...	17
Nuisances detected or reported	...	...	...	...	...	407
Notices served	...	...	...	...	...	339
Nuisances abated	...	...	...	...	...	266

The difference in the number of nuisances detected or reported, and the number abated, is due, with few exceptions, to the fact that the time allowed for abatement in the notices served in December had not expired at the end of the year; and that the notices for the abatement of nuisances detected in December, were not issued till after the Council meeting this month.

I have made periodical inspections of the various Courts, Common Lodging Houses, and Slaughter-houses, and have commenced a house-to-house inspection of the town. I have found in several instances, that the traps of the w.c.'s, instead of being connected direct to the drain, empty into cesspits, and it is not until the cesspits are nearly full that there is any possibility of the contents discharging into the drains. Every time the closet is flushed a most abominable stench arises. In every case I have had the cesspits emptied, then filled in and the pans and traps re-set, and properly connected to the drains. I have found that generally the w.c. pans and traps are very foul and offensive, due chiefly to the want of proper flushing apparatus and the bad form of pan. It is a common thing to find the pans half filled with excremental matter, the rapid removal of which to the outfall is so necessary and important. A large number of closets require proper ventilation, and I have found, as a rule, a ready compliance on the part of owners to carry out the required work.

I have detected four cases of over-crowding, three of which are abated. The occupier in the remaining case was summoned this month, and an order obtained from the Magistrates.

I have found in several instances in connection with stables, there has been no proper drainage, and no receptacle for manure as required.

There have been five houses which I have had disinfected after scarlet fever cases. I have also had the patients' clothing and the bedding disinfected.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

F. E. G. BRADSHAW, C.E. Mem. San. Inst.

Town Hall,

January, 1897.